

Rural Mail Carriers Celebrate 50 Years of Servicing 600,000 Families

The Canadian Champion

Rain, Wind, Snow-Mail Always Arrives

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Second Section.



THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY of rural mail deliveries was observed last week and it marked close to 50 years of rural mail carrying in Milton, Campbellville and Hornby post offices as well. Above, Milton R.R. 3 driver Jim White sorts out mail for the 29-mile route which he has covered daily for the past eight years.



A HELPING HAND with the loading of mail into Bill Nevills' station wagon is given by Milton postmaster William Randall, right. Mr. Nevills has had the R.R. 5 job two years and serves 63 boxholders plus 35 other householders with their mail. Nine drivers deliver mail to nearly 1,500 families on the 11 routes out of Milton, Hornby and Campbellville post offices.

Six days a week, 1,500 rural families in the Milton, Hornby and Campbellville districts walk out to the mailbox to pick up the day's mail. The mail's always there — through rain, wind and storm, and it's all the work of nine rural mail carriers who spend a total of approximately 20 hours a day driving nearly 300 miles to serve their needs.

And delivering mail from the post offices isn't their only job. They pick up letters, parcels, money orders and C.O.D. parcels at the boxes and often get requests to leave stamps or take a message to a neighbor over on the next concession.

40 Years on Route

It's a busy life for the nine rural drivers, but they enjoy it. Take George Stokes at Campbellville, for instance. He's been travelling the route for 40 years, first by horse and then by car.

And George Leslie, who carries the two rural routes at Hornby, said friends scoffed at him 18 years ago when he took over R. R. 2. "They said I'd never drive it in the winter—but I did," he explains.

Rural mail carrying in the district has come a long way since a man named Jim Currie first began dropping mail off at Hornby, Drumquin, Boyne and Omagh post offices about 50 years ago. According to the story, Jim couldn't read or write but knew where every

letter belonged if it was sorted properly.

Big Money?

And Mr. Leslie recalls the Hornby routes paid \$42 a month to the drivers who used horses before he began the route.

Milton's six rural routes are handled by R. A. Brownridge on R.R. 1 and 4, Mr. and Mrs. Ken Watson on R.R. 2 and 6, Jim White on R.R. 3 and Bill Nevills on R.R. 5.

Mr. Watson is the senior man with 11 years of service, while his wife has helped him considerably in his past few years. His routes include 184 calls at boxes, plus service to an additional 120 families called householders. The route is 34 miles long, six days a week.

Serves Trafalgar

R. A. Brownridge has been carrying mails for 10 years on R.R. 1 and 4, including 165 calls and an additional 105 householders. The 53-mile route carries him through Northern Trafalgar township on the Town, First, Second, Third Fourth and Fifth lines.

North-west of town is served by Jim White on R.R. 3, on a 29-mile route which serves 143 boxholders and another 53 householders. He's been delivering for about eight years now.

Bill Nevills has been on his R.R. 5 for two years and serves 63 boxes and 35 householders six days a week.

Campbellville Drivers

At Campbellville, Mr. Stokes holds the service record with 40 years. He took over the R.R. 1 from his father and drove a horse for the first years on the job. He serves 130 boxes and 15 families on his route.

Doug Agnew on R.R. 2 has been carrying rural mail for eight years, and now serves 114 boxes and 32 more families. He recalls that when he started the route, there were 70 calls.

Mrs. Mary Ferrier, R.R. 3 driver, has 126 boxes and 26 more families on her route which covers 26 miles. She has been driving the route for three years.

Deliver to Offices

The three Campbellville routes each take about two hours or better to drive. Kilbride and Moffat post office mails are also delivered to the post offices by the drivers.

George Leslie at Hornby, who covers both the rural routes with his wife as helper, has 200 boxholders and 47 householders to visit daily. His 40-mile route takes over two hours. He recalls that there were 40 or 50 boxes on R.R. 1 when he took it over 10 years ago, while R.R. 2 had only 30 boxholders 18 years ago.

Their mode of travel? While horses aren't used any more, their vehicles range from 1930 to late model cars, to pickup trucks, to small English cars, to station wagons.



—Staff Photo

RURAL FAMILIES in the Campbellville area get mail delivery six days a week by carriers, Doug Agnew of R.R. 2, Milton, Mrs. Mary Ferrier of R.R. 3, and veteran George Stokes of R.R. 1. Mr. Stokes, who took over the route from his father, has carried the rural mail by horse and car for 40 years.



—Staff Photo

MRS. JESSIE WATSON has been helping her husband Ken for several years with the rural mail deliveries on R.R. 2 and R.R. 6, Milton. Here she deposits a few letters in a box not far from town, one of 180-odd daily calls she makes.



—Staff Photo

IN THE TRUCK and ready to start out on his 53-mile delivery route on Milton's R.R. 1 and R.R. 4 is R. A. Brownridge of Milton. He serves 270 families in the northern Trafalgar area with their mail delivery.

Rural Delivery Started in 1908 Serves 600,000

About 600,000 families and the Post Office Department celebrated a special birthday on Friday, October 10. Canada's first rural route was placed in operation on that date in 1908, between Hamilton and Ancaster, Ontario, introducing a postal service whereby country dwellers had their mail delivered to their homes.

The contractor on R. R. No. 1, Hamilton, the official name of the pioneer, wended his way for seven miles from Hamilton to Ancaster, Ontario, and returned, each day serving householders along the route of travel.

Stage Routes

When the system was introduced, it was confined to existing stage routes, but strong claims were made by those on other roads with the result that by 1912 under improved regulations, all persons residing along well defined roads over a mile long became eligible for rural mail delivery.

Another advantage was that Rural Route couriers were permitted to sell postage stamps, take applications and accept money for Money Orders and Postal Notes. By November of that year, over 25,000 boxes were being served on 900 routes.

Steady Increase

Over the years, the number of calls has continued to increase and on almost all country lanes the horse and buggy has now been replaced by an automobile. A few hours travel by car covers a route which required a day to complete formerly.

As happened in the case of the original service, some rural routes are the forerunners of letter carrier delivery as Canadian cities continue to expand. In 1951, in an effort to provide mail service to isolated groups of families on the Newfoundland coast, several "water rural routes" were started.

They were over 30 miles long and patrons were served by motor launch once a week. There were no mail boxes involved as patrons met the boats at the wharves and conducted their postal business on the spot.

Alaska Highway Service While not strictly speaking a rural route, the Alaska Highway service certainly handles mail for

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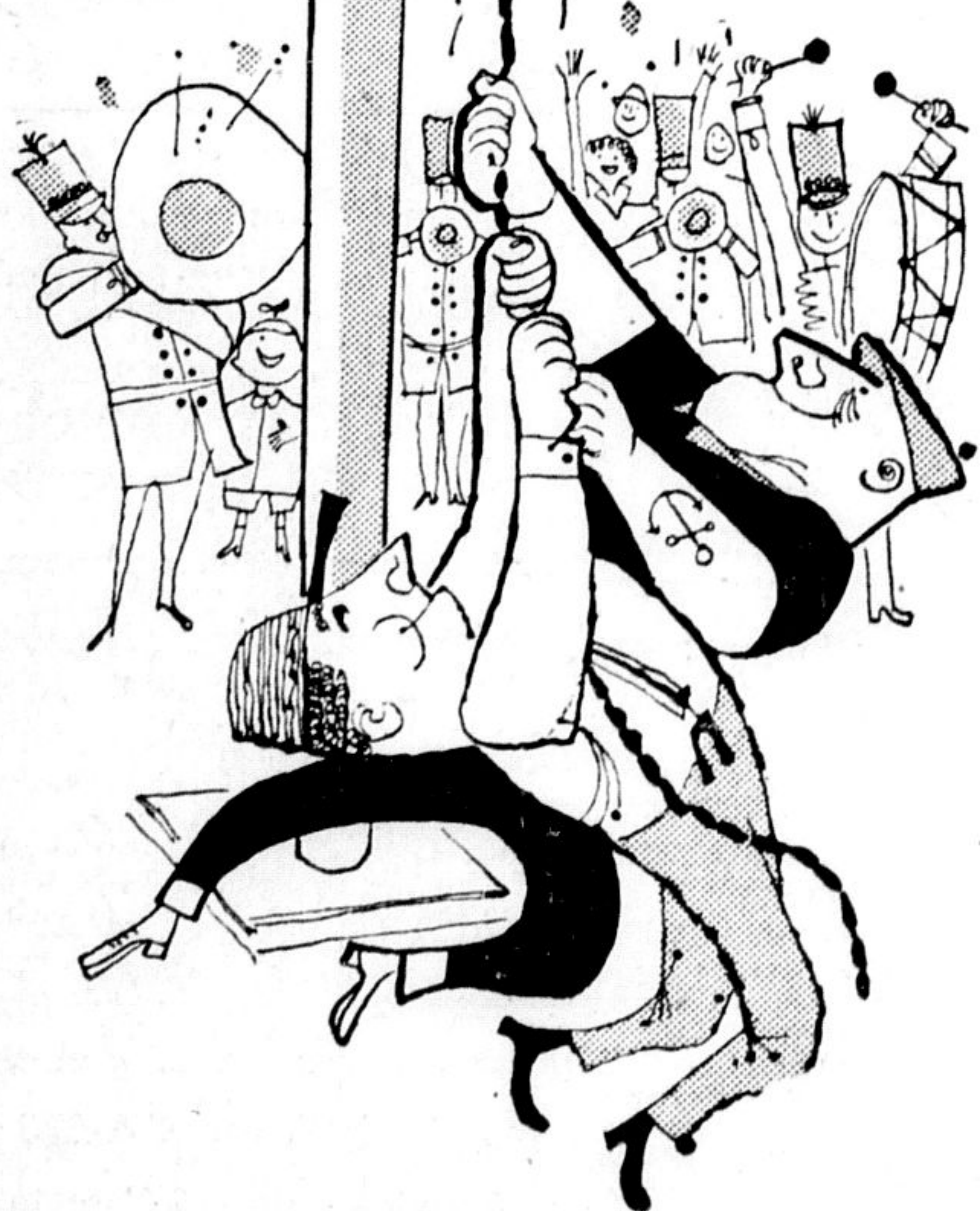
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